

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

RSR-01 SAJ-01 /092 W

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R 271621 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2203

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: BY- ELECTION: MANCHESTER EXCHANGE

1. LIBERALS ARE HOPING TO SCORE ANOTHER UPSET VICTORY AT A PARLIAMENTARY BY- ELECTION -- THIS TIME IN THE EXCHANGE DISTRICT OF MANCHESTER JUNE 28. LABOR HAS HELD THE SEAT SINCE 1945 AND AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION -- WHICH THE LIBERALS DID NOT CONTEST -- TOOK 69 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. JOHN SPILLER, WHO ORGANIZED CYRIL SMITH' S SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN IN ROCHDALE LAST OCTOBER, AND TREVOR JONES, WHO MASTER-MINDED GRAHAM TOPE' S SPECTACULAR VICTORY IN SUTTON AND CHEAM IN DECEMBER, ARE BOTH HARD AT WORK IN MANCHESTER EXCHANGE. THEY REGARD THE AREA -- WHICH

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HAS WITNESSED MASSIVE SLUM CLEARANCE PROGRAMS AND A STEADY DECLINE IN POPULATION OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS -- AS PARTICULARLY FERTILE GROUND FOR THEIR VOTE-WINNING STRATEGY OF " COMMUNITY POLITICS."

2. THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE IS MICHAEL STEED, A WELL-KNOWN LECTURER IN POLITICS AT MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY. HIS LABOR OPPONENT IS ALDERMAN FRANK HATTON, WHO UNSUCCESSFULLY CONTESTED A NEIGHBORING CONSTITUENCY AT THE GENERAL ELECTION. THE CONSERVATIVES, WHO POLLED 28 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN 1970, HAVE PUT UP BILL LOFTUS, A CITY ACCOUNTANT, BUT ARE NOT FIGHTING TOO HARD. SEEING THEMSELVES LIKELY TO FINISH THIRD, THEY WOULD OBVIOUSLY DRAW SOME CONSOLATION FROM LABOR'S EMBARRASSMENT SHOULD THE LIBERALS WIN. A FOURTH CANDIDATE HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE SPLINTER COMMUNIST PARTY (MARXIST- LENINIST).

3. COMMENT: THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTIONS SINCE TOPE TOOK SUTTON AND CHEAM, AND THE LIBERALS HAVE CONTESTED ONLY TWO OF THEM - BOTH UNSUCCESSFULLY. THEY ARE IN NEED OF A FILLIP TO SUSTAIN THE POPULAR IMAGE THAT A LIBERAL REVIVAL IS UNDERWAY. BY THE SAME TOKEN, LABOR IS DETERMINED TO SPIKE SUCH A REVIVAL AND HAS PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO COUNTER-ACTING THE VAUNTED " COMMUNITY POLITICS." SUFFERING AS IT IS FROM THE STRAINS OF CONSTANT BICKERING WITHIN ITS RANKS, THE LABOR PARTY NEEDS A VICTORY IN MANCHESTER EXCHANGE, IF ONLY TO AVOID FURTHER DEMORALIZATION.

ANNENBERG

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON07430
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730632/aaaajsnt.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2001 by willialc>; APPROVED <13-Sep-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980304
Subject: BY- ELECTION: MANCHESTER EXCHANGE
TAGS: PINT, UK
To: BONN
BRUSSELS
COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN
EUR
LUXEMBOURG
PARIS

SECSTATE WASHDC
THE HAGUE

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005